

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 4533

STADIS//////////

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION IMMEDIATE TO SANTO DOMINGO
052035Z JUN 78, HW REPEATED URSTATION:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 4533

STADIS

FOR AMBASSADOR YOST FROM AMBASSADOR IRVING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJECT: IAPA COMPLAINT AGAINST AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

1. I AM QUOTING IN FULL BELOW A COPY OF A LETTER WHICH
WAS SENT TO ME THIS AFTERNOON BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
CARIBBEAN PUBLISHING AND BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION, OLIVER
CLARKE, WHO ALSO IS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE JAMAICAN
DAILY GLEANER, THE LARGEST AND OLDEST INDEPENDENT
NEWSPAPER HERE. CLARKE IS PRO-U.S. AND A FRIEND. HE FEELS
BOTH AS PRESIDENT OF CPBA AND A NEWSPAPERMAN HE CANNOT IGNORE
THIS LETTER. HE HAS ASKED FOR MY COMMENTS WHICH HE MIGHT
WANT ALSO TO PRINT. YOUR URGENT ADVICE REQUESTED.

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2. LETTER IS FROM JAMES B. CANEL, DATED MAY 31, 1978 AND
ADDRESSED, IN CIRCULAR FASHION, TO U.S. MEMBERS, THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE CPBA.
BERMAN ORNES, WHO IS IN A DOMINICAN HOSPITAL
RECOVERING FROM MAJOR SURGERY, HAS ASKED ME TO
INFORM YOU THAT HIS NEWSPAPER, EL CARIBE, WAS SUBJECTED

TO CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE BY THE U.S. EMBASSY IN SANTO DOMINGO DURING THE UNCERTAIN DAYS FOLLOWING THE MAY 16 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

YOU WILL RECALL THAT ELEMENTS OF THE ARMY, APPARENTLY WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF PRESIDENT BALAGUER, SEIZED THE BALLOT BOXES WHEN THE OPPOSITION LEADER, GUZMAN, APPEARED TO BE WINNING, AND RUMORS WERE RIFE ABOUT A COUP D'ETAT. (THE COUP DID NOT DEVELOP AND GUZMAN EVENTUALLY WON THE ELECTION).

WHILE TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY REIGNED, AN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVE VISITED EL CARIBE AND OTHER NEWSPAPERS TO WARN THAT GRAVE CONSEQUENCES WOULD ENSUE IF THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION WERE NOT RESPECTED. THE EMBASSY MAN SUGGESTED THAT EL CARIBE RUN AN EDITORIAL OF SUPPORT. GERMAN, WHO WAS ALREADY IN THE HOSPITAL, SAID HIS SON, ANTONIO, REPLIED THAT HE WAS A NEWSPAPERMAN AND NOT A POLITICIAN. EL CARIBE DID NOT RUN AN EDITORIAL. LISTIN DIARIO, ON THE OTHER HAND, DID RUN AN EDITORIAL "BEGGING THE ARMY ON BENDED KNEE" TO REFRAIN FROM TAKING OVER. EL CARIBE, HOWEVER, DID RUN AN EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF U.S. INTERFERENCE IN DOMINICAN AFFAIRS AND THE IMPLIED THREAT IN A STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT CARTER ON WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION WERE NOT RESPECTED. PRESIDENT BALAGUER WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE U.S. POSITION IN A SPEECH IN WHICH HE GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THE PRESIDENCY WOULD BE HANDED OVER

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TO THE WINNER. A SPOKESMAN OF THE ARMED FORCES ALSO ISSUED ASSURANCES THAT A COUP WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE.

THAT SAME DAY THE EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER CALLED ON GERMAN TO TELL HIM THAT THE ASSURANCES OF THE ARMED FORCES DID NOT SATISFY THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HE ASKED IF GERMAN WAS NOT PLANNING TO RUN AN EDITORIAL. GERMAN REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT.

THE PRESS OFFICER SAID THE PRESTIGE AND SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY WERE IN DANGER. ORNES REPLIED THAT WHAT WAS REALLY IN DANGER WAS THE PRESTIGE OF THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE THREATS MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER. HE SAID SUCH BLATANT INTERVENTION IS UNACCEPTABLE.

AS A RESULT OF ALL THIS, GERMAN REPORTS, HIS RELATIONS WITH THE EMBASSY HAVE BEEN BROKEN.

SUBSEQUENTLY, ON MAY 28, A FRIENDLY U.S. CORRESPONDENT VISITED ANTONIO ORNES AT THE PAPER AND TOLD HIM TO BE CAREFUL BECAUSE HE HAD INFORMATION THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY WAS OUT TO "GET" GERMAN AND EL CARIBE,

THAT GERMAN WOULD BE "DISCREDITED AND DESTROYED" IN
THE IAPA. GERMAN ASSUMES THE CORRESPONDENT HEARD THIS
FROM EMBASSY PEOPLE.

THE EMBASSY IS HEADED BY NEWLY APPOINTED
AMBASSADOR ROBERT YOST. PHILLIP AXELROD, THE SECOND
IN COMMAND, IS THE ONE WHO URGED GERMAN TO
EDITORIALIZE. THE PRESS OFFICER WHO VISITED NEWSPAPERS IS
H.BELL. END QUOTE.
IRVING UNQUOTE

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